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ABSTRACT

A study of the aftercare services offered juvenile delinquents after residential placement was conducted in New York State. The emphasis was on the Juvenile Aftercare Services program, which serves the majority of youth being conditionally released into the community. Based on findings from the study involving interviews and site visits, the following recommendations are made: (1) aftercare counselors' caseloads are too high and should be reduced; (2) the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) should develop a youth's service plan before the youth is released from a facility; (3) the New York City Board of Education should have a school placement arranged at least one month prior to the youth's release to aftercare; (4) aftercare counselors should have access to a broader array of community support services for youth released to aftercare; (5) OCFS should expand the number of family advocates to work with families before and after their children return from juvenile facilities; (6) youth released from contract residential facilities should be provided aftercare services like youth released from state-run facilities; and (7) contract residential providers should be required to have a school placement arranged for every youth at least one month prior to the youth's release. Appendixes contain the OCFS conditions of release and standards of supervision, a list of members of the task force on aftercare services, and the questionnaires used to interview contract agency and OCFS counselors. (SLD)

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A Look at Aftercare Services Provided to Delinquent Youth

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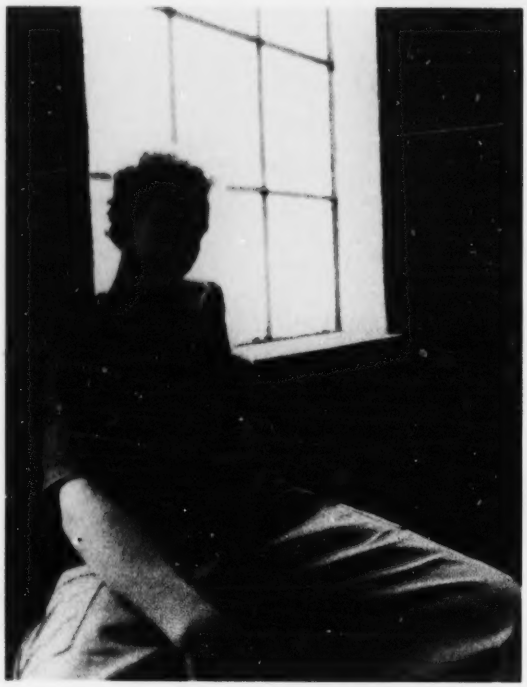

Returning Home:

A Look at Aftercare Services Provided to Delinquent Youth

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Executive Summary

Most people learn about the juvenile justice system from the media — reading newspapers, watching the evening news. These stories generally focus on sensational cases involving a child from a high profile family or a gruesome but infrequent homicide. Unfortunately, it is these handful of cases a year that politicians cite when calling for tougher penalties for juveniles, contributing to the myths that a new generation of superpredator youth is coming of age and that juvenile crime rates are rising.

While these atypical cases are frightening and disturbing, they do not reflect the situation of the majority of 2,200 children who enter the State juvenile justice system each year. Sadly, the Governor and the New York State Legislature have responded to these cases and others like them across the country with a mixture of fear and ignorance, proposing juvenile justice reform bills that increase the number of youth placed in State-run facilities and lengthen placement, without significantly improving the services offered in the facilities or the provision of aftercare services. These unusual cases are not suitable examples to cite when drafting legislation, creating appropriate punishments or developing new programs to address the high recidivism rates of youth moving in and out of the juvenile justice system.

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) believes that identifying the gaps in the juvenile justice system that effect all youth will lead to a more appropriate discussion among policymakers and lawmakers needed to improve the juvenile justice system. To this end, we solicited recommendations from experts in the juvenile justice field to identify the key components they believed would significantly reduce juvenile crime and issues which require examination and activism. A broad range of perspectives were represented by the policymakers, prosecutors and defense attorneys, advocates, detention facility administrators, Family Court judges, community-based organizations, and elected and appointed officials who were interviewed. Based on these discussions, CCC determined that the provision of quality aftercare services to juvenile delinquents who return home after a period of incarceration is the one area that all agreed was most likely to keep youth from returning to the juvenile justice system.

Recognizing this consensus, Citizens' Committee for Children undertook a study to determine (1) which juvenile delinquents are offered aftercare services after residential placement, and (2) whether the services provided to these youth who return to New York City facilitate a successful transition into community life. Although the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) offers different day placement options for youth who are released from State-run facilities, we targeted the Juvenile Aftercare Services program, which serves the majority of youth being conditionally released to the community. We also included in our research aftercare services provided to youth who are released from residential facilities that contract with OCFS. The State does not require aftercare or follow-up services for juvenile delinquents placed in contract residential facilities.

Based on CCC's findings, we made a series of recommendations, highlights of which are listed below:

For Youth Place in State-Run Facilities –

AFTERCARE COUNSELORS' CASELOADS ARE TOO HIGH AND SHOULD BE REDUCED. Among other responsibilities, Aftercare Counselors conduct the home assessment, set certain conditions of release, develop the youth service plan, ensure that the required contacts take place and refer youth to other community support services to facilitate their transition home after confinement in a facility. Of the Aftercare Counselors that we surveyed in January and February 1999, we found that caseloads ranged from 14-36 youth per aftercare worker, and five of the aftercare workers surveyed were responsible for an average of 22-36 youth on their caseload. As of September 1999, caseloads had decreased to 12.3-26 youth per aftercare worker for all Aftercare Counselors in New York City.[1]

[1] Bureau of Juvenile Aftercare Services, Office of Children and Family Services, September 17, 1999.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The State should increase funding for Juvenile Aftercare Services to hire additional caseworkers to ensure that Aftercare Counselor caseloads remain at 15:1 with the intensity of supervision reflecting the needs of each case.

OCFS SHOULD DEVELOP A YOUTH'S SERVICE PLAN BEFORE THE YOUTH IS RELEASED FROM A FACILITY. The Aftercare Worker begins to work with the youth and family after the case is referred to the worker for a home assessment in anticipation of the youth's conditional release, which can be anytime after a youth has been in placement for at least four months. With the referral to conduct the home assessment, the Aftercare Worker receives information about the youth's progress in program and the youth's family status. According to OCFS regulations, Aftercare Counselors must create the Youth Service Plan that outlines the services necessary to meet the needs of each youth and to ensure a continuity of services in the community for any issues identified within the facility. OCFS, however, does not require the finalization of the Youth Service Plan until the 30th day following the release to the community.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** For a successful transition home, Aftercare Workers should develop the Youth Service Plan before the youth's release to the community. We suggest that the Aftercare Counselors receive the youth's facility file at least one month prior to the conditional release date to ensure enough preparation time to develop the youth's service plan and establish linkages with community-based organizations. Prior to his/her release the aftercare worker should identify the youth's needs and community-based organizations that could meet those needs, such as after-school programs, mental health providers, or job training programs, that have openings for the youth immediately upon his/her return home.

THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD HAVE A SCHOOL PLACEMENT ARRANGED FOR EVERY YOUTH AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE YOUTH'S RELEASE TO AFTERCARE. The majority of youth who are arrested have a history of truancy, and placement in a State-run facility may be the only continuous education that they have received for years. As described in the Chancellor's Regulation A-160, the New York City Board of Education (BOE) recommends that students returning from a juvenile justice facility should begin making arrangements for their return to school at least one month prior to their release.[2] Since the compulsory education age is 17 in New York City, at least half of the youth who were released to aftercare in 1997 were required to attend school,[3] yet according to our survey, it can take weeks and even months for youth to become enrolled in regular and special education after returning home from placement in a State-run facility.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** To promote academic achievement and to reduce truancy, youth must attend school the next day after they are released from a juvenile facility. We recommend that the Board of Education make arrangements to find a school placement for each youth prior to his/her release to Aftercare, which includes providing OCFS with the date that the youth will re-enter school. Once the youth is released to Aftercare, the Aftercare Counselor and the youth's parents should accompany the youth to school the next day after the youth's return. We recommend that the Aftercare Counselor act as an advocate for the youth to facilitate the enrollment process, as it can be a confusing and frustrating process to re-enroll students who have been released from a juvenile facility.

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2 *Students Returning To New York City Public Schools From Agency Care*, Regulation of the Chancellor No. A-160, City School District of the City of New York, 5/13/93.

3 *Youth In Care*, Annual Report, Division of Rehabilitative Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 1997.

AFTERCARE COUNSELORS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO A BROADER ARRAY OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUTH RELEASED TO AFTERCARE. According to OCFS policy, youth are eligible for release to Aftercare when they have appropriate family and community support services in place, among other criteria. In addition to enrolling youth in school, the Aftercare Counselors are responsible for finding appropriate community-based programs that will best meet the needs of each youth. Each Aftercare Counselor is provided with a copy of an annual inventory of OCFS funded programs for each county within the catchment area. In addition, Aftercare Supervisors must ensure that their office makes available a listing of local community service and program directories to its counselors to help identify resources for its clients. However, the local community service directories seemed to consist of programs that the Aftercare Workers learned of through their experience and by word of mouth and fail to provide comprehensive lists of the services available in each community.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Aftercare Counselors should also have knowledge of on-going mental health treatment and support programs in their catchment areas for youth released to Aftercare, as well as available crisis services and develop relationships with these providers. We recommend that OCFS request a list of the licensed child and adolescent in-patient and out-patient mental health providers by zip code from the State Office of Mental Health (SOMH) to expand their database. We further recommend that OCFS request copies of each of the Community District Resource Directories that the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) developed for each borough in 1998.

OCFS SHOULD EXPAND THE NUMBER OF FAMILY ADVOCATES TO WORK WITH FAMILIES BEFORE AND AFTER THEIR CHILDREN RETURN HOME FROM JUVENILE FACILITIES. The majority of youth placed on Aftercare return to their parents. OCFS has begun to offer Family Orientation groups to parents in New York City, staffed by one Family Advocate in each borough except Staten Island, to support families as they prepare for their children's release. In addition, OCFS completes an Intake Assessment of the family by interviewing the parent or guardian, preferably in the youth's home. The Aftercare Counselors who were surveyed believe that many of the parents do not support the work of the Aftercare Counselor and do not assume responsibility for their child's progress. Some parents are not willing to go to the school to enroll their child and are not strong advocates for their children's re-enrollment. Most counselors surveyed stated that parents call their counselor weekly and even a few times a week to discuss the youth's poor behavior, problems that they are having with the child or to mediate an argument between themselves and their child. Some parents often want the youth's release revoked. Clearly, many of the parents with children on Aftercare status struggle with their child.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** We support the use of the Family Advocacy Bureau to work with families prior to the youth's release to help the parents adjust to the child's return and prepare the parents for the steps necessary to have the child comply with his/her service plan. We recommend that OCFS expand the number of Family Advocates to serve more families. This work must extend beyond families who present high risk and should include the use of Family Orientation groups and Family Advocates for all families preparing for their children's return home.

For Youth Placed in Contract Residential Facilities –

YOUTH RELEASED FROM CONTRACT RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES SHOULD BE PROVIDED AFTERCARE SERVICES JUST AS YOUTH RELEASED FROM STATE-RUN FACILITIES. Youth who are placed in contract residential facilities as juvenile delinquents have no period of aftercare services built into their placement period unlike youth who are placed in State-run facilities. Because these facilities do not provide aftercare services, OCFS requires youth to spend their entire 12 month or 18 month placement in the contract facility, unlike youth who are transitioned early from State-run facilities to Aftercare status in the community. Once a youth's placement period has

expired, the young person is released from the contract facility and sent home. No state regulations require contract agencies to provide follow-up services to youth who return home from residential placement, nor is State funding available to provide such services.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that New York State allocate funding to hire workers to provide follow-up services for youth who have been released from contract residential facilities. Furthermore, the contract agencies should be required to conduct a home assessment prior to a youth's release, just as the State requires for youth who are released from State-run facilities.

CONTRACT RESIDENTIAL PROVIDERS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO HAVE A SCHOOL PLACEMENT ARRANGED FOR EVERY YOUTH AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE YOUTH'S RELEASE. Most youth placed in contract residential facilities are enrolled in special education classes while in placement and each of these youth is certified to be placed in a SIE VII[4] classroom upon his/her release. Although not required to make arrangements for youth to return to school prior to his/her release, the contract residential providers that we surveyed stated that they will select the school perhaps with the assistance of the youth and family, and will forward the youth's records to the school. The contract residential providers are not required to monitor whether the youth was eventually enrolled in school or if the youth attends school upon enrollment.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that the contract residential providers be required to make arrangements to find a school placement for each youth at least one month prior to his/her release. As outlined in the Board of Education regulations, the contract provider should send a letter to the appropriate Board of Education office describing the youth's change in status and requesting placement in a specific school, and follow-up to ensure enrollment.

[4] Specialized Instructional Environment (SIE) Classes are separate classes for youth with more severe disabilities, and class sizes range from 6-12 students. SIE VII is for children who are severely emotionally disturbed.

Background

OCFS SERVICE	NUMBER OF CHILDREN STATEWIDE - 5/31/99[5]	NUMBER OF CHILDREN NEW YORK CITY - 5/31/99[6]
Juvenile Aftercare Services	511	295
Foster Care Program	98	75
Electronic Monitoring	19	13
Home Based Intensive Supervision	18	0
Evening Reporting Centers	68	53

I. Youth Placed in State-Run Juvenile Facilities

Under the Family Court Act, a child who is adjudicated a juvenile delinquent can be removed from the community and placed in a juvenile facility for an initial period of either 12 or 18 months, depending on whether the act is a misdemeanor or a felony.[7] Family Court judges can send these youth to a State-run facility or to a facility that is run by a voluntary agency. If the youth is found to have committed a designated felony, the initial placement period is three or five years in a State-run facility, depending on the severity of the act.[8] Facilities that are operated by the State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) have the authority to extend the initial placement period annually until the youth's 18th or 21st birthday, depending on the severity of the charge. If OCFS believes that the youth can still benefit from the structure and programming in an OCFS facility or if the youth continues to be a threat to the community, OCFS must file a petition with the Family Court and have the judge approve its request. During their placement, youth can be sent to either a secure, limited secure or non-secure OCFS facility or a combination of facilities, depending on the severity of the crime and the discretion of the Family Court and OCFS. In 1997, 1,498 youth were admitted to OCFS residential facilities.[9]

A youth can be conditionally released from a juvenile facility prior to the expiration of the sentence if OCFS determines that it is in the best interest of the youth, suitable supervision and support is provided, and there is a reasonable probability that the youth can be released without threatening the public's safety.[10] Upon the conditional release from an OCFS facility, youth receive Juvenile Aftercare Services, in which case they are supervised by Aftercare Counselors who are responsible for providing supervision and support to youth during the conditional discharge period. OCFS assigns the level of supervision the youth receives upon release to the community. More intensive programs have been developed to supplement aftercare services, and these include Electronic Monitoring, Home Based Intensive Supervision (HBIS), and Evening Reporting Centers (ERC), which vary in the intensity and form of supervision they provide.

At any point in time, there are approximately 650 youth who have been conditionally released from State-run facilities and are on aftercare status, with approximately 65% or 422 living in New York City.[11] Of the 295 youth on Aftercare on 5/31/99, 58% (171 youth) were sixteen years of

5 Office of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Health Services, August 1999.

6 Ibid.

7 Family Court Act § 353.3(3) and (5)

8 Family Court Act §353.5 (4)(a)(i) and §353.5(5)(a)(i)

9 *Youth In Care*, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Rehabilitative Services, Annual Report 1997.

10 New York State Executive Law §510-a(1)

11 New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 1998.

age or younger and another 35% (104 youth) were 17 years old.[12] Along with Juvenile Aftercare Services, OCFS has begun to operate the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) with 75 slots for substance abusing youth who enter OCFS facilities. IAP is offered to youth who are placed in Middletown Residential Center, which is a facility designated for juvenile delinquents who have substance abuse problems. The youth placed on IAP spend four months in placement at Middletown and the remaining 14 months of an 18 month sentence in the community receiving intensive aftercare services. Aftercare Counselors in IAP carry a caseload of 7:1, as opposed to the 20-30 cases in the regular Aftercare program. IAP is just beginning to receive its first group of youth.

Whether sentenced to 12 or 18 months in a state facility, OCFS regulations recommend a minimum of five months of Juvenile Aftercare Services, which is built into the placement period. Although living in the community while working with an Aftercare Counselor, youth are still in the custody

OCFS Operated Residential Facilities

SECURE
Harlem Valley
Brookwood
Goshen
MacCormick
Tryon

LIMITED SECURE
Highland
Louis Gosset, Jr.
Industry School
Oatka
Lansing
Ella McQueen
Pyramid Reception Center
Sgt. Henry Johnson YLA
Taberg
Pyramid Transition

NON-SECURE CENTERS
Tryon Boys
Allen
Tryon Girls
Annsville
Brace
Cass
Cattaraugus
Brentwood
Great Valley
Staten Island
Harriet Tubman
Bronx
Middletown
Adirondack Wilderness Challenge
Brooklyn
Red Hook
Auburn
Adirondack

NON-SECURE HOMES
Rochester
Syracuse (Genesee)
Mt. Vernon
Gloversville
Wyandanch
Brooklyn
Buffalo
Schenectady
Albany
Syracuse (Salina)
Staten Island

[12] Ibid.

of the State. Before returning to the community, each youth is required to sign the "Conditions of Release" (Appendix A) that requires youth to attend school or find employment, mandates that youth abstain from using drugs and alcohol, requires youth to report to their Aftercare Counselor and obey their parents, among other provisions. The Aftercare Counselor is permitted to specify additional conditions that will promote the youth's ability to remain safely in the community. Once released to Aftercare, youth are assigned to one of three levels of supervision – high, moderate, or administrative – each representing a different degree of supervision and monitoring (Appendix B). Virtually all youth begin Aftercare under high supervision, and move to moderate supervision after two months. In addition to visiting and telephoning youth, Aftercare Counselors are responsible for enrolling youth in school, helping youth resolve personal issues to facilitate their transition home, making referrals to community-based organizations and following-up to ensure that the youth receive the necessary services.

Once the original 12 or 18 month sentence expires, Aftercare Services terminate and the youth is released from the State's custody. OCFS has the authority to request an Extension of Placement (EOP) order from the Family Court, upon the advice of an Aftercare Counselor if he/she believes that the youth requires continued supervision and support while in the community. OCFS can also recommend that a youth's conditional release be revoked and return the youth to an OCFS facility if a young person repeatedly violates the "Conditions of Release". Youth can request a fair hearing to dispute the validity of the OCFS request.

The effectiveness of Juvenile Aftercare Services offered to juvenile delinquents has never been evaluated. Of the juvenile delinquents who were released from OCFS facilities between 1991 and 1994, 78% were rearrested for a felony or misdemeanor within 30 months of discharge, and 45% were rearrested for a violent felony offense during the same period.[13]

II. Youth Placed in Contract Residential Facilities

In addition to the option of placing a youth in a State-run facility, a Family Court judge can also place a juvenile delinquent in a contract residential facility for a period of 12 or 18 months, depending on whether the act was a misdemeanor or a felony.[14] Among other considerations, judges will evaluate the level of security necessary for each youth, eligibility criteria of private residential providers, and availability of beds. The 52 private residential facilities that accept juvenile delinquents are non-secure facilities that contract with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), serving a range of juvenile delinquents from 1-200 at each facility. In 1997, 730 youth were admitted to contract residential facilities.[15]

Because there is no period of aftercare for youth released from contract agencies comparable to the OCFS Juvenile Aftercare Program, juvenile delinquents must serve their entire sentence in residence at the contract agency and are not conditionally released into the community. If a contract agency could provide a plan for providing aftercare services to youth released early from placement, OCFS would consider conditionally discharging youth to the community as is the practice for youth placed in State-run facilities. However, the State does not provide funding to contract agencies to provide such aftercare services, nor are there regulations that require contract agencies to provide follow-up services to youth upon leaving their custody.

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13 *Factors Contributing To Recidivism Among Youth Placed With The New York State Division For Youth*, New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Justice Systems Analysis, 1999.

14 New York State Family Court Act §353.3

15 *Youth In Care*, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Rehabilitative Services, Annual Report 1997.

Voluntary Agencies that Contract with OCFS

Baker Hall
Berkshire Farm Center & Services for Youth
Cayuga Home for Children
Children's Home of Jefferson County
Children's House
Children's Village
Community Maternity Services
DePaul Community Services
Edwin Gould Services for Children
Elmcrest Children's Center
Equinox, Inc.
Gateway Youth and Family Services
George Junior Republic
Graham Windham Services to Children and Families
Gustavus Adolphus Children's Home
Hillsdale Children's Center
Hope for Youth
Hopevale
Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services – Kaplan House
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services – Hawthorne Cedar Knolls
Jewish Child Care Association – Edenwald Center
Jewish Child Care Association – Pleasantville Cottage School
Lake Grove School
Lakeside School
LaSalle School
Liberty Resources Inc.
Lincoln Hall
Madonna Heights Services
Martin DePorres Group Homes
McQuade Children's Services
New Life Homes – Snell Farms
Northeast Parent and Child Society
Office of Mental Health
Parsons Child and Family Center
Pius XII Youth & Family Services – Chester Campus
Pius XII Youth & Family Services – Holy Cross Campus
Pius XII Youth & Family Services – Middletown
Pius XII Youth & Family Services – Poughkeepsie
Randolph Children's Home
Residential Treatment Facilities
Salvation Army (Syracuse) – Friendship House
Salvation Army – Social Services for Children
Salvation Army – Wayside School for Girls
Selden – Centerreach Community Coalition
Sheltering Arms Children's Services
St. Anne Institute
St. Cabrini Home
St. Christopher – Ottilie Services for Families and Children
St. Christopher's – Jennie Clarkson Child Care Services
St. Francis Academy, Lake Placid
St. Joseph's Villa of Rochester
St. Mary's Children and Family Services
Timothy Hill Children's Ranch
Vanderheyden Hall
Wyndham Lawn Home for Children

The contract residential providers are considered social services agencies and are subject to the rules and regulations under the Social Services Law that include the same service plan review and reporting requirements as residential providers who care for children and youth placed in their custody through the foster care system. Whether assuming the care and custody of youth who are juvenile delinquents or who are in need of foster care, contract residential providers are reimbursed on a per diem basis for the youth in their care to pay for their room and board, staffing, clothing, and utilities, among other costs associated with their care. The contract residential providers are not required to provide aftercare services nor are they reimbursed for the provision of follow-up services.

Methodology

In the fall of 1998, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) held a policy briefing on juvenile aftercare services attended by 25 advocates, lawyers, service providers and other interested New Yorkers, with presentations from the Director of Juvenile Aftercare Services at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and a Senior Parole Officer from the New York State Division of Parole. As part of our research to learn more about the State regulations and procedures for providing Juvenile Aftercare Services, CCC met with the Director of Aftercare Services and other senior staff at OCFS, as well as the Statewide Release Planning Coordinator and the Release Planning Coordinator for youth residing in facilities in New York City. We also did a literature review and researched the OCFS Juvenile Aftercare Services Manual, the New York State Social Services Law, Executive Law and the Family Court Act.

To conduct our field work, CCC convened the Juvenile Aftercare Services Task Force (Appendix C), composed of 11 trained volunteers who developed and administered survey instruments to conduct on-site interviews with Aftercare Counselors and senior staff at contract residential facilities. One survey was developed and administered to four contract agencies that provide residential services to juvenile delinquents (Appendix D). Agencies serving a large number of juvenile delinquents were selected for the study. The questionnaire focused on intake procedures, length of stay, services provided while in placement, supports in place at the point of release, and aftercare services.

CCC developed another survey instrument that was administered to eight of the 21 New York City Aftercare Counselors from OCFS who are responsible for providing support and supervision to youth who are conditionally released from State-run facilities (Appendix E). Through the assistance of our trained volunteers, CCC interviewed two Aftercare Counselors each from Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx to gain a range of experiences of the supervision and services provided to youth who are transitioning back to community life. The questionnaire focused on seven areas: case composition, contacts while still in a juvenile facility, home assessments, preparing for conditional release, levels of supervision and supports services offered while on aftercare, major rule violations, and the use of foster care upon release.

Field work also included meetings with the New York City Department of Probation and the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to learn about the aftercare supervision and services that each provides. The Department of Probation contracts with OCFS to provide aftercare supervision and services to certain juvenile delinquents who are returning to Brooklyn, while DJJ offers a voluntary aftercare program to youth who are returning to the community after placement in the City juvenile detention system.

The conclusions in this report were formed from the results of our two surveys, and findings and research collected in CCC's informational interviews. CCC's report focuses exclusively on the Juvenile Aftercare Services Program and the follow-up procedures for juvenile delinquents who are placed in private residential facilities. As we interviewed only eight of the 21 Aftercare Counselors in New York City, we do not intend for our findings to be representative of the experiences of all Aftercare Counselors. Rather, our findings point to the experiences and services in place at a point in time and serve to highlight possible systemic strengths and weaknesses of the Aftercare program, and to offer solutions.

Findings and Recommendations

PART I: Youth Placed in State-Run Facilities

AFTERCARE COUNSELORS' CASELOADS ARE TOO HIGH AND SHOULD BE REDUCED

FINDINGS: Among other responsibilities, Aftercare Counselors conduct the home assessment, set certain conditions of release, develop the youth service plan, ensure that the required contacts take place and refer youth to other community support services to facilitate their transition home after confinement in a facility. Of the Aftercare Counselors that we surveyed in January and February 1999, we found that caseloads ranged from 14-36 youth per aftercare worker, and five of the aftercare workers surveyed were responsible for an average of 22-36 youth on their caseload. Caseloads in the upstate counties are generally lower than those in New York City. As of September 1999, caseloads had decreased to 12.3-26 youth per aftercare worker for all Aftercare Counselors in New York City.[16] OCFS is working to fill some vacancies which should further reduce caseloads.

Once released to Aftercare, youth are assigned to one of three levels of supervision – high, moderate, or administrative – each representing a different degree of supervision and monitoring (Appendix B). According to the OCFS Juvenile Aftercare Services Manual, when the average number of cases per Aftercare Counselor in one office (which represents one borough) exceeds 20, the Aftercare Supervisor should evaluate the caseloads and reduce the level of supervision for selected youth. We are particularly troubled that quality supervision is being sacrificed because of caseload size and staff shortages and that the State would permit a practice that could jeopardize a youth's successful transition home and threaten the public safety. Furthermore, OCFS policy states that the Aftercare program is designed to incrementally test a young person's ability to live in the community. It is not a true test of the youth's ability to make a successful transition to the community if the level of supervision is prematurely reduced.

RECOMMENDATION: We recommend that the State increase funding for Juvenile Aftercare Services to hire additional caseworkers to ensure that Aftercare Counselor caseloads remain at 15:1 with the intensity of supervision reflecting the needs of each case. 15:1 is the national standard developed under the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program (JISP).

OCFS SHOULD DEVELOP A YOUTH'S SERVICE PLAN BEFORE THE YOUTH IS RELEASED FROM A FACILITY

FINDINGS: Under the OCFS regulations, each youth is assigned to an Aftercare Counselor upon admission into the OCFS system, and the Aftercare Counselor receives a copy of the youth's intake file, which includes the Family Court placement order, the Department of Probation's Investigation and Report (I&R), any psychiatric evaluation, and the OCFS intake screen assessment. The Aftercare Worker begins to work with the youth and family after the case is referred to the worker for a home assessment in anticipation of the youth's conditional release, which can be anytime after a youth has been in placement for at least four months. With the referral to conduct the home assessment, the Aftercare Worker receives information about the youth's progress in program and the youth's family status. We found inconsistencies in the practice for transferring the facility file to the Aftercare Counselor, as one worker stated that the file is generally received two months prior to the release date, another stated one month prior to the release, and others stated that the file is received either a week prior to the release or at the same time as the youth's release from a facility.

When we asked the Aftercare Counselors to describe the kind of contact they had with youth prior to their release, they stated that they send a

16 Bureau of Juvenile Aftercare Services, Office of Children and Family Services, September 17, 1999.

letter to the youth to introduce themselves as required by OCFS, and may call the young person if they are unable to locate the parents. A few of the counselors interviewed stated that they generally have contact with someone at the facility prior to the youth's release.

According to OCFS regulations, Aftercare Counselors must create the Youth Service Plan that outlines the services necessary to meet the needs of each youth and to ensure a continuity of services in the community for any issues identified within the facility. OCFS, however, does not require the development of the Youth Service Plan until the 30th day following the release to the community, even though OCFS requires that supports be in place prior to a youth's release to the community. It seems impossible that such support services, such as an after-school program, mental health counseling, or job training, can be in place upon the youth's release when the development of the service plan is not due until the 30th day after release.

RECOMMENDATIONS: For a successful transition home, Aftercare Counselors should develop the Youth Service Plan before the youth's release to the community. We suggest that the Aftercare Counselors receive the youth's facility file at least one month prior to the conditional release date to ensure enough preparation time to develop the youth's service plan and establish linkages with community-based organizations. Prior to his/her release, the aftercare worker should identify the youth's needs and community-based organizations that could meet those needs, such as after-school programs, mental health providers, or job training programs, that have openings for the youth immediately upon his/her return home. Many of these community-based providers may have waiting lists for their services, therefore advance notice is preferable to ensure a slot in a program. In addition, the worker should not only meet with the youth's parents, but talk to the youth and the facility staff. Aftercare Counselors should also be required to have at least one contact with the youth's juvenile counselor by phone prior to the youth's release.

It is imperative that these youth are able to continue the structured lifestyle that they experienced while in an OCFS facility, especially since they are most likely returning to the community where they got into trouble in the first place. Without community supports in place the day that the youth comes home and first meets with his/her Aftercare Counselor, youth will have more difficulty transferring the skills that they learned while in a facility to community life.

OCFS SHOULD NOT RELEASE YOUTH TO THE COMMUNITY IF THE AFTERCARE WORKER HAS FOUND THE HOME TO BE UNSUITABLE

FINDINGS: Prior to planning for a youth's return home from a State-run facility, the Aftercare Counselors are required to conduct a home assessment to determine whether the home is suitable for the youth's return. The home assessment is also used by the Aftercare Counselors as an opportunity to explain their role in the family's life, to explain the Aftercare program and to develop recommendations for the youth's service plan. This meeting represents the family's initial contact with the Aftercare system. Aftercare workers contact the family to arrange for the home assessment upon the request of the facility. When we asked the workers when they completed the home assessment, the responses varied – some stated that they perform the home assessment after the youth has been in the facility for four months, another counselor stated two months prior to release, yet another counselor responded that the home assessment takes place three weeks prior to release and others stated that the assessment generally takes place within 30 days of the youth's release.

OCFS does not require that the entire family be present at the home visit, merely that the Aftercare Worker meet with a parent or legal guardian to assess the home for the youth's return. We found that the Aftercare Counselors that answered this question have different approaches when interviewing the family during the home assessment. For example, some require both parents be present at the home visit if the youth is from a two parent household, some stated that they require only one parent/legal guardian be present during the home assessment and oth-

ers described other persons whom they require to be present at the home assessment. These include the youth's girlfriend or other key family member, or the home owner or lease holder.

When completing the home assessment, OCFS requires that Aftercare Workers use a standard evaluation form to determine whether a home is suitable for a youth's return. The counselors interviewed all use the home assessment tool as required by OCFS and spend anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours assessing the home. Of the Aftercare Counselors who answered this question, some estimated that 15% or less of homes were found unsuitable for the youth's return home and others estimated that between 17% - 35% of the youth had homes that were found to be unsuitable for their return. The most common reasons that a home would be found unsuitable include lack of parental supervision, parental health problems, parental substance abuse, an open child welfare case against the parent, the victim of the youth's crime is in the home, or illegal activity in the home. The Aftercare Counselors also stated that there are circumstances when the parent does not want the child back in the home, the caseworker cannot locate the parent, or gang activity in the neighborhood threatens the youth's safety.

OCFS has begun the Prescriptive Program Initiative to better assess youth and family needs when the youth first enters residential placement. There are four main components to this initiative: (1) the Initial Risk Assessment that is administered to the family upon the youth's entry into the OCFS system; (2) the Residential Behavior Assessment that is administered to the youth periodically during placement in an OCFS facility; (3) the Pre-Release Home Assessment that is administered to the family prior to the youth's release; and (4) a final assessment of the youth and family while the youth is on Aftercare and living in the community. OCFS began conducting the Initial Risk Assessment of the family approximately 18 months ago, and uses this risk assessment tool for all families that have children entering the OCFS system.

The Residential Behavior Assessment (RBA) is a pilot that is being used at intake for youth placed at five facilities: Tryon Limited Secure Center for boys, Louis Gosset, Jr., Limited Secure Center, Lansing Limited Secure Center, Annsville Non-Secure Center, and Staten Island Non-Secure Center. The RBA is first administered after the youth has been in residential placement for 30 days, and is readministered every 60 days thereafter to measure the level of risk of recidivism that the youth may present to the community. This tool is being used to determine which youth are ready for conditional discharge and can handle returning to the community. OCFS has been conducting Pre-Release Home Assessments system-wide since July 1998 to assess any risks that the family may pose to the youth and his/her likelihood to reoffend upon release. Lastly, OCFS plans to develop a risk assessment tool to be administered to youth and their families after the youth has been conditionally released to the community. Through these four main components, OCFS intends to better identify which youth are prepared to leave residential placement and return to the community, while also identifying which families need support services from OCFS to prepare for their youth's release. OCFS expects to fully implement its Prescriptive Program Initiative system-wide by 2001.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We support the new Prescriptive Program Initiative to identify risk levels in youth and families prior to the youth's return to the community, and the use of various risk assessment tools throughout the youth's placement in State custody. Home assessments must be conducted for every youth prior to his/her release, and OCFS must ensure that every child is returned to a safe home environment. We recommend that the entire family be present at the home assessment, excluding children under the age of 10. If the worker has identified problems within the household, the worker should be responsible for referring the family to the Family Advocacy Bureau for referrals to preventive services, mental health counseling, or substance abuse treatment prior to approving the home. The Family Advocacy Bureau should also be responsible for working with the family to improve the home situation prior to approving the home for the youth's release.

THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD HAVE A SCHOOL PLACEMENT ARRANGED FOR EVERY YOUTH AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE YOUTH'S RELEASE TO AFTERCARE

FINDINGS: The majority of youth who are arrested have a history of truancy, and placement in a State-run facility may be the only continuous education that they have received for years. As described in the Chancellor's Regulation A-160, the New York City Board of Education (BOE) recommends that students returning from a juvenile justice facility should begin making arrangements for their return to school at least one month prior to their release.[17] To initiate this process, OCFS should send a letter to the appropriate BOE office, depending on the child's education level, describing the student's change in status and including the student's school records and any clinical reports, if the student is requesting placement in special education. Upon receiving the student's records, the BOE will arrange a placement interview prior to the child's release from the facility, and requests that the child's parent or aftercare counselor accompany the student to the interview. In some cases, the interview can take place over the phone. If the student applies for placement in special education, the student may be required to undergo additional assessments by the Committee on Special Education (CSE). According to the BOE, if the youth was enrolled in special education while in an OCFS facility, the youth is certified for special education services upon his/her return to the New York City public school system. If a child is released from a facility without previously making a request for enrollment, the school is required to accept the youth at the school while the appropriate paperwork and assessments are completed. In order to facilitate the students' return to the public school system, the BOE Office of High School Admissions (OHSA) employs staff members to work exclusively on school placement for youth released to Aftercare.

Notwithstanding the BOE re-enrollment procedures, it has been difficult for OCFS to get a commitment from the BOE to re-enroll youth in their custody immediately upon their release to the community. Of the youth who were released to Aftercare in 1997, some Aftercare Counselors surveyed stated that it took from one to over two weeks to enroll a youth in school after his/her release to the community. For those who required special education, Aftercare Counselors stated that the waiting period increased significantly, mostly because the New York City BOE does not recognize the Individual Education Plan (IEP) completed in OCFS facilities, and require youth to be re-certified after their release. We found that of the youth who were released to Aftercare in 1997, Aftercare Counselors estimated that it took from three weeks to over two months to enroll a youth in special education. These youth are eligible for home tutoring while they are awaiting enrollment in special education.

Since the compulsory education age is 17 in New York City, at least half of the youth who were released to aftercare in 1997 were required to attend school,[18] yet according to our survey, it can take weeks and even months for youth to become enrolled in regular and special education after returning home from placement in a State-run facility. Most of the counselors surveyed stated that there is a proscribed period for school enrollment, however, other counselors stated that there is no timeframe within which a youth must be enrolled in school. Of those who agreed that OCFS has a designated time period for enrollment, some of the counselors stated that they were required to enroll a youth in school within 30 days of their release from a facility, and others stated that the proscribed mandatory enrollment period is immediately upon release or three days thereafter.

17 *Students Returning To New York City Public Schools From Agency Care*, Regulation of the Chancellor No. A-160, City School District of the City of New York, 5/13/93.

18 *Youth In Care*, Annual Report, Division of Rehabilitative Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 1997.

To facilitate the enrollment process, some of the counselors will call the school and/or go to the school on their own, but few will attend meetings at the school with the youth to facilitate enrollment. Counselors will accompany a parent to the school to facilitate enrollment, however there seems to be a reluctance to handle the parents and most of the counselors preferred that the parents take the initiative themselves and work with the school to enroll their child. If the parent is unable or otherwise fails to enroll the youth in school, then the Aftercare Counselor generally assumes this responsibility.

Juvenile delinquents have a stigma attached to them when they return to the community and many public schools are reluctant to take a youth from the juvenile justice system into their classrooms. However, each child is entitled to a free and public education until age 21, whether eligible for regular or special education classes.[19] Likewise, the Board of Education has regulations in place that mandate the immediate re-enrollment of these youth upon their return the community.[20]

RECOMMENDATIONS: To promote academic achievement and to reduce truancy, youth must attend school the next day after they are released from a juvenile facility. We recommend that the New York City Board of Education (BOE) make arrangements to find a school placement for each youth at least a month prior to his/her release to Aftercare. As outlined in the Board of Education regulations, OCFS should send a letter to the appropriate BOE office describing the youth's change in status and requesting placement in a specific school. The letter should include the youth's anticipated release date and include the youth's Aftercare Counselor's name, phone number and address as the contact person during the enrollment process. OCFS should also include the youth's school records and any clinical reports, if applying for special education.

Given the geographic limitations, OCFS should be permitted to facilitate a phone interview from the facility with the BOE, instead of arranging in-person interviews as is the current practice. The BOE should work with OCFS to agree on Individual Education Plan (IEP) model and procedures to prevent youth from having to be re-tested for special education services when returning home.

Once the youth is released to Aftercare, the Aftercare Counselor and the youth's parents should accompany the youth to school the next day after the youth's return. We recommend that the Aftercare Counselor act as an advocate for the youth to facilitate the enrollment process, as it can be a confusing and frustrating process to re-enroll students who have been released from a juvenile facility. For example, if the appropriate paperwork was not completed for the youth, the Aftercare Counselor must tell the school that it is required to accept the youth immediately while the paperwork and any additional assessments are completed. Without this advocacy, it is unlikely that these students will be permitted to enter the school.

AFTERCARE COUNSELORS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONTACT EACH SCHOOL WEEKLY TO VERIFY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF EACH YOUTH

FINDINGS: Under the Standards of Supervision, if on high or moderate supervision the counselors are required to visit the youth at school one time per month or call the school bi-weekly to monitor the youth's attendance. If the youth is on administrative supervision, the counselor is only required to call the school once per month to monitor the youth's attendance. Of the youth who were released to Aftercare in 1997, 50% were sixteen years of age or younger at the point of release[21] and required to attend school by State law.

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19 New York State Education Law §3202

20 *Students Returning To New York City Public Schools From Agency Care*, Regulation of the Chancellor No. A-160, City School District of the City of New York, 5/13/93.

21 *Youth In Care*, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Rehabilitative Services, Annual Report 1997.

RECOMMENDATIONS: OCFS must require its Aftercare Counselors to monitor more closely the school attendance of youth on Aftercare, which includes contacting the school weekly to monitor the youth's attendance. Failure to strictly enforce school attendance will severely undermine the youth's ability to successfully reintegrate into his/her community. In addition to tracking school attendance, we recommend that Aftercare Counselors monitor the youth's academic performance, including receiving report cards and establishing a relationship with the principal at the youth's school. The BOE should view the Aftercare Counselors as a resource and should contact them when necessary.

OCFS MUST REQUIRE THAT ALL YOUTH ON AFTERCARE KEEP EVERY SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT WITH THEIR AFTERCARE WORKERS AS SPECIFIED IN THE YOUTH'S CONDITIONS OF RELEASE

FINDINGS: Depending on the level of supervision and the reporting schedule set by the Aftercare Counselor upon the youth's release, youth are required to contact their Aftercare Counselor on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Virtually all youth begin Aftercare on high supervision and are required to report to their Aftercare Counselor on a weekly basis. Generally the youth are required to call their Aftercare Counselor at the office, but contacts can take place in a range of locations, including at the youth's home, at school, in the Aftercare Counselor's office, and at the youth's place of employment, if appropriate. These contacts generally last between 15 minutes to two hours, according to the counselors that we surveyed. Although there are no required topics for discussion during the contacts, we found that the Aftercare Counselors generally speak to the youth about school, relationships, clothes, money, problems at home, curfews, parental substance abuse, adjustment to living at home, referrals to community-based programs and community problems.

Of the Aftercare Counselors that we surveyed, some stated that less than half of the youth who were released to their Aftercare caseloads in 1997 made all of the required contacts. If a youth misses a required contact, most of the Aftercare Counselors that we interviewed stated that they call the youth to follow-up on the missed appointment and determine if the youth offers a reasonable excuse for his/her absence. In addition to rescheduling appointments with youth, the Aftercare Counselor will impose sanctions on the youth that include increasing the number of required contacts, changing the youth's curfew, and restricting the youth to being at home and school. If the young person still does not comply with the contact requirements, then the counselor will write up a major rule violation report that could lead to a revocation of the youth's release. From January-August 1999, OCFS returned 159 youth to facilities from Aftercare generally because the youth was AWOL or had committed another crime.[22]

Although many of the youth who were released to Aftercare in 1997 did not make all of the required contacts, the Aftercare Counselors that we surveyed stated that youth often contact their counselors independent of their required contacts to discuss school problems, relationship problems, referrals to other services, medical care, counseling, and mostly for problems at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS: OCFS must require that youth meet all of their contact requirements while on Aftercare. To achieve this, we support the policy that youth have unlimited accessibility to their Aftercare Counselors and are pleased that some youth are taking advantage of this opportunity when they are having difficulties. We also support the use of intermediate sanctions to teach youth to make their contact appointments, including the use of more restrictive curfews, increasing the level of supervision, and requiring additional contacts. When fully implemented, the new Residential Behavior Assessment (RBA) will help identify youth who can handle returning to the community and being on Aftercare, which should reduce the number of missed contacts with Aftercare Counselors.

[22] New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Juvenile Aftercare Services, November 1999.

AFTERCARE COUNSELORS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO A BROADER ARRAY OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUTH RELEASED TO AFTERCARE

FINDINGS: According to OCFS policy, youth are eligible for release to Aftercare when they have appropriate family and community support services in place, among other criteria. In addition to enrolling youth in school, the Aftercare Counselors are responsible for finding appropriate community-based programs that will best meet the needs of each youth. In developing the release plan, we found that all the Aftercare Counselors surveyed consider after-school programs, mental health services, family counseling and substance abuse services. Some of the counselors consider linking the youth with a primary physician in developing the release plan, and others consider health insurance, and employment.

Each Aftercare Counselor is provided with a copy of an annual inventory of OCFS funded programs for each county within the catchment area. In addition, Aftercare Supervisors must ensure that their office makes available a listing of local community service and program directories to its counselors to help identify resources for its clients. However, the local community service directories seemed to consist of programs that the Aftercare Counselors learned of through their experience and by word of mouth and fail to provide comprehensive lists of the services available in each community. OCFS has a Community Program Specialist who is responsible for maintaining an inventory of the programs funded by OCFS, which include preventive services, foster care, and youth development programs. The Community Program Specialist does not have listings of mental health services offered by the State Office of Mental Health (SOMH), or job and vocational training programs offered by the State Department of Labor, however, OCFS receives approximately 750 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) slots each summer to provide paid employment to youth on Aftercare.

In our interviews, the Aftercare Counselors stated that they most commonly refer youth to after-school programs, employment training, mental health services and substance abuse services. A few counselors stated that they commonly refer youth to tutoring programs, while others stated that they usually refer youth to a primary physician. Other services commonly referred to include GED programs, Planned Parenthood, AIDS counseling and family counseling. Each of the Aftercare Counselors interviewed described the shortage of mental health services, job and vocational training programs, and employment opportunities for youth on their caseloads. Every counselor stressed the value of employment for youth released to Aftercare.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Having reserved SYEP slots is an excellent job resource for youth on Aftercare. To further expand the resources available to Aftercare Supervisors and Counselors, OCFS should work with The Fund for the City of New York to purchase their database of New York City based employment training programs, which is called TRAIN. The Aftercare Counselors should also have knowledge of on-going mental health treatment and support programs in their catchment areas for youth released to Aftercare, as well as available crisis services and develop relationships with these providers. We recommend that OCFS request a list of the licensed child and adolescent in-patient and out-patient mental health providers by zip code from the State Office of Mental Health to expand their database. We further recommend that OCFS request copies of each of the Community District Resource Directories that the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) developed for each borough. These directories, published in February 1998, provide comprehensive listings of the community-based programs, including mental health services, located in each community district and lists the phone numbers and addresses of the programs as well.

OCFS SHOULD ENSURE THAT ALL ELIGIBLE YOUTH HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE UPON RELEASE TO THE COMMUNITY

FINDINGS: All youth placed in State-run juvenile facilities are eligible for Medicaid because they are living in out-of-home placement. Once they are discharged, however, Medicaid coverage does not automatically continue unless the young person's family meets the standard eligibility criteria, which requires either no wages or very low earnings that do not exceed the minimum wage. Aftercare Counselors are not required to work with the young person to secure health insurance coverage prior to being released to the community. For families receiving public assistance, the facility will provide each youth with a letter requesting that the young person be added to the household's budget, which will also re-certify Medicaid coverage. OCFS stated, however, that although youth are re-certified for Medicaid coverage, youth experience long delays that can extend up to five months before receiving the Medicaid cards. In turn, these delays can impact on the youth's ability to receive mental health counseling or health services upon their release to the community, which can significantly hinder their ability to transition back home successfully. To minimize these delays, OCFS can access the youth's Medicaid number, which young people can use to pay for health and mental health services.

Of the youth released in 1997 to the Aftercare Counselors that we surveyed, some counselors stated that none of their clients had health insurance coverage when they were released to the community. Others stated that 90-100% of their clients had Medicaid coverage at the time of their release because their families were receiving public assistance and therefore qualified for Medicaid. Most Aftercare Counselors that we surveyed stated that they help youth enroll in Medicaid or Child Health Plus,[23] although it can take four to five months for Medicaid recertification. Some youth released from State-run facilities have serious mental health problems and need immediate access to continued counseling upon their release to the community. Without health insurance, these youth will not be eligible for such counseling. Although infrequent, where youth have been ineligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus, OCFS has provided health insurance while the young person was on aftercare.

RECOMMENDATIONS: OCFS should be responsible for enrolling youth in Medicaid or Child Health Plus prior to their release from a facility so that youth are able to receive health and mental health services upon their release to the community. We also recommend that OCFS work with the New York State Department of Health to expedite enrollment in Medicaid or Child Health Plus. If they qualify for Medicaid, youth who are released to Aftercare should have access to health and mental health services on the day of their release and should not be required to wait weeks or months for services. In addition, OCFS should link the youth with a primary physician upon release and make referrals to medical and mental health services, if necessary. If youth have special health and/or mental health needs, such as asthma or requiring individualized therapy, referrals should be made to the appropriate specialty services upon discharge.

OCFS SHOULD EXPAND THE NUMBER OF FAMILY ADVOCATES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN ARE RELEASED TO AFTERCARE

FINDINGS: The majority of youth placed on Aftercare return to their parents. OCFS has begun to offer Family Orientation groups to parents in New York City, staffed by one Family Advocate in each borough except Staten Island, to support families as they prepare for their children's release. In addition, OCFS administers its Initial Risk Assessment to the family at intake by interviewing the parent or guardian, preferably in the family's home. This assessment is used to measure risk factors that may contribute to the youth's likelihood to reoffend upon being released

[23] Child Health Plus is a State administered health insurance program for low income working families.

from an OCFS facility. If the family receives a score of 3 or higher, on a scale of 1 thru 6, OCFS refers the family to its Family Advocacy Bureau for counseling and support services. However, the Aftercare Counselors who were surveyed believe that many of the parents do not support the work of the Aftercare Counselor and do not assume responsibility for their child's progress. For example, the Aftercare Counselors surveyed found that some parents are not willing to go to the school to enroll their child and are not strong advocates for their children's re-enrollment. In these instances, the Aftercare Counselor will accompany the parent to the school or will enroll the youth him/herself. In other instances, the parents fail to wake youth up for school and will not attend office visits with the youth and counselor, nor are they able to communicate with their child.

Each of the Aftercare Counselors surveyed stated that parents are able to contact them at anytime while their child is on Aftercare status. Most counselors surveyed stated that parents call their counselor weekly and even a few times a week to discuss the youth's poor behavior, problems that they are having with the child or to mediate an argument between themselves and their child. Other parents call their child's counselor two to three times a month to mediate arguments or to complain about the youth's behavior. Some parents often want the youth's release revoked.

Clearly, many of the parents with children on Aftercare status struggle with their child. Although parents must review their child's Conditions of Release at the first meeting with the Aftercare Counselor, many parents do not understand their roles and responsibilities and those of the Aftercare Counselor while the child is on Aftercare. Some counselors suggest that parents sign a contract upon their child's release that clearly states their roles and responsibilities, forcing them to participate in their child's transition home. In 1999, OCFS created a parental contract that they suggest Aftercare Counselors use with the families that they are working with, however there is no State legislation that mandates parents to sign this contract. Although the counselors recognize the parents' lack of parenting skills and their frustration, counselors do not see their role as mediator or babysitter for the youth on their caseloads. Alternatively, the counselors would like to empower parents to work more positively with their children and advocate on their behalf.

In 2000, OCFS plans to implement a one-year demonstration project for youth returning to the Bronx, Queens, and Onondaga counties to provide more intensive Aftercare services. Called the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) approach, this intervention places a highly trained social worker to work with the family upon the youth's release to the community. Although only five months in duration, the social worker is available to the family 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The MST approach has been cited by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) as an effect intervention tool to sustain youth in the community upon their return from placement, and has shown promising results in other states. At the end of the pilot, OCFS will evaluate its effect on youth released from its facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We support the use of the Family Advocacy Bureau to work with families prior to the youth's release home to help the parents adjust to the child's return and prepare the parents for the steps necessary to have the child comply with his/her service plan. However, in order to adequately serve the number of families who require counseling and support services before and upon their child's return home, OCFS must expand the number of Family Advocates. The Family Advocates should also use Family Orientation groups for all families preparing for their child's return home, and not just those who present high levels of risk. We are pleased that when releasing a youth to Aftercare, OCFS is focusing on the entire family and not just the service needs of the youth. For example, the Family Advocacy Bureau can refer parents to preventive service programs that are designed to strengthen and support families who are at risk of having their children placed in foster care, and can better address the lack of parenting skills than the counselor. Lastly, we support the use of family orientation nights and we recommend that

the Family Advocacy Bureau hold bi-monthly support groups for parents with youth returning from State-run facilities, and also offer family gatherings to celebrate the family in a positive way.

OCFS SHOULD CREATE SEPARATE CASELOADS FOR AFTERCARE COUNSELORS WHO SUPERVISE YOUTH WHO RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY AND ENTER FOSTER CARE

FINDINGS: When the Aftercare Counselor finds a home to be unsuitable for a youth's return, the case is referred to the Release Planning Coordinator who works at the facility where the youth has been placed. The Coordinator is responsible for finding an alternative home for the youth upon his/her release from a State-run facility, including placing the youth with a foster family or in a group home. OCFS recruits its own foster parents and contracts with voluntary providers directly to provide congregate care to juvenile delinquents leaving OCFS facilities. We found that Aftercare Counselors can carry a caseload that includes both youth who are released home and those who are released to a congregate care foster care placement. However, there is a special foster care unit within OCFS Juvenile Aftercare Services that is responsible for providing supervision and support services to youth who are released to foster boarding homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We recommend that OCFS create separate caseloads for Aftercare Counselors who supervise youth who return to the community and live in group homes, similar to the specialized Aftercare caseloads that exist for youth returning to foster boarding homes. Although the number of youth who leave State juvenile facilities to live in a foster care group home is small, approximately 30 youth annually, it is important that OCFS develop specialized caseloads to address the distinct needs of youth who do not return home to their families. Youth who are released from State-run facilities to foster care placement have very different needs than youth who return home to their families and deserve Aftercare Counselors who are specially trained to deal with the distinct needs of this population. Furthermore, OCFS must create clear policies and procedures for handling youth who cannot be released to their families and who must be placed in foster care instead. Included in its regulations, OCFS must state that these youth are eligible for Aftercare services and will receive the same supervision and support as youth who are released home.

There has consistently been confusion over which agency retains custody of youth who are part of the child welfare system and juvenile justice system at the same time, and which services are offered. For example, when a foster care youth is arrested in New York City and arraigned in Family Court, it is unlikely that either parent or the foster care agency will appear on behalf of the youth because the parent has temporarily lost custody of the child and the foster care agency is not made aware of the youth's arrest. To address this deficiency, the Vera Institute of Justice has developed Project Confirm which seeks to identify and alert the foster care agency about the arraignment so that a reliable resource will assume responsibility for the youth while the hearing is pending. Without such an advocate, these youth will most likely be placed in detention.

PART II: Youth Placed in Contract Residential Facilities

YOUTH RELEASED FROM CONTRACT RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES SHOULD BE PROVIDED AFTERCARE SERVICES JUST AS YOUTH RELEASED FROM STATE-RUN FACILITIES

FINDINGS: Juvenile delinquents can be placed in a contract residential facility instead of a State-run facility. Youth who are placed in contract residential facilities as juvenile delinquents have no period of aftercare services built into their placement period like youth who are placed in State-run facilities, therefore they are required to spend their entire 12 or 18 month placement in the contract facility. If a contract agency could provide a plan for providing aftercare services to youth released early from placement, OCFS would consider conditionally discharging youth to the community as is the practice for youth placed in State-run facilities. However, the State does not provide funding to contract agencies to provide such aftercare services, nor are there regulations that require contract agencies to provide follow-up services to youth upon leaving their custody.

During a youth's placement in a contract facility, the provider must conduct service plan reviews (SPR) every six months and facilitate visits between the parents and child. Since most of the contract residential facilities are located upstate, the providers are required to facilitate quarterly visits, instead of monthly visits if the parents live within 100 miles of the facility. All four contract residential providers that we surveyed offer free monthly transportation and overnight accommodations to parents visiting their children. Depending on the priority placed on parental involvement by each contract agency, some of the agencies that we surveyed work diligently to encourage visits and regular contact with their children by calling parents regularly, and are able to achieve high parental participation rates. One of the agencies that we surveyed, however stated that some of the children that they receive were raised by their extended families and have no contact with their parents. This same agency also stated that the parents who do live with their children prior to the placement generally are not interested in visiting their children while in placement and that very few make any visits during the 12 or 18 month stay. This agency also stated that the only outreach conducted is a standard letter and sometimes a phone call to the parents.

Once a youth's placement period has expired, the young person is released from the contract facility and sent home. No state regulations require contract agencies to provide aftercare or follow-up services to youth who return home from residential placement, nor is State funding available to provide such services. Three of the contract agencies surveyed stated that they provide follow-up services, regardless of the absence of this requirement under state regulations, paying for this work by using privately raised funds or grants. At one agency this follow-up continues for six months and consists of letters and/or phone calls to the parents. Another agency will include referrals for support services to continue after the youth's release in the discharge plan. For another agency, preparing for the youth's release begins while the youth is at living at the facility and includes working with the parents to facilitate strong familial relationships and prepare the family for the youth's return home. This agency locates caseworkers in the community to provide follow-up services to each youth released to the community for 4-6 months. The fourth agency surveyed would like to receive funding from the state to provide aftercare services and feels extremely nervous about releasing youth home with a bus ticket, which is its current procedure. Unlike the OCFS Aftercare Counselors, the contract facilities cannot request an Extension of Placement solely to provide aftercare services to youth who have been released from their facility and will only be granted an extension of placement in a facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We recommend that New York State allocate funding to hire workers to provide follow-up services for youth who have been released from contract residential facilities. Furthermore, the contract agencies should be required to conduct a home assessment prior to a youth's release, just as the State requires for youth who are released from State-run facilities. We also recommend that OCFS require contract residential providers to offer aftercare services for a minimum of five months after a youth's discharge to the community, just as the State requires aftercare be provided to youth who are released from State-run facilities.

The Work Appreciation for Youth (WAY) Program provides an excellent model exists for providing aftercare services to youth released from residential placement. Developed by The Children's Village in 1984, WAY is an independent living skills program that includes a strong aftercare component to foster care youth or juvenile delinquents who are discharged from residential placement. Designed as a five stage program, the WAY model teaches youth the value of employment and helps them to develop employment skills through non-paid chores and community service, beginning paid work experience, advanced work experience, and community-based work experience – which are all part of the first four stages of the program. Youth are given extensive job coaching, performance evaluations and counseling through each of these four stages.

Once discharged from the agency, youth enter the fifth stage of the program and for a period of five years are provided a range of follow-up services, including mentoring, tutoring, and general planning. This general planning includes monitoring the youth's attendance at school. During this period the youth are expected to have a savings plan that can be matched by the WAY program annually, up to $500. Those in job training programs may receive an additional $1,000 annually for two years, and those attending college can also receive $1,000 annually for four years. Of the 126 youth who began the WAY program at The Children's Village Residential Treatment Center (RTC) program in 1984-1991, 69% completed the five-year program.

Based on the preliminary findings from the WAY Alumni Study, The Children's Village found that 92% of those interviewed had completed high school or the equivalent, 59% had some college education, 50% of those interviewed were working full time at the point of the interview with a median income of $18,336, and 31% were working part-time.[24] We strongly recommend that OCFS adopt the WAY model and require each private residential provider implement this program for juvenile delinquents placed in their custody.

[24] The Children's Village, Research Department, Evaluation of the WAY program.

CONTRACT RESIDENTIAL PROVIDERS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO HAVE A SCHOOL PLACEMENT ARRANGED FOR EVERY YOUTH AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE YOUTH'S RELEASE

FINDINGS: Most youth placed in contract residential facilities are enrolled in special education classes while in placement and each of these youth is certified to be placed in a SIE VII[25] classroom upon his/her release. Although not required to make arrangements for youth to return to school prior to his/her release, the contract residential providers that we surveyed stated that they will select the school perhaps with the assistance of the youth and family, and will forward the youth's records to the school. The contract residential providers are not required to monitor whether the youth was eventually enrolled in school or if the youth attends school upon enrollment. Two of the providers that we surveyed stated that they will find school placements for youth prior to release from the community, although not required by OCFS.

A few of the providers that we surveyed do not believe that these youth will regularly attend school once released to the community. Based on the difficulties seen re-enrolling youth who have been released from State-run facilities, we believe the same delays exist for youth who are released from contract residential facilities.

The same New York City Board of Education regulation that outlines the process for arranging for a school placement for youth returning from State-run juvenile facilities also applies to youth who are returning from contract residential facilities.[26] As noted earlier, the contract agency should send a letter to the appropriate Board of Education office describing the youth's change in status along with the youth's school records and any clinical reports, if requesting placement in special education. The youth will be required to have an interview by the Board of Education prior to his/her release and may be required to undergo additional assessments at the Board of Education if applying for special education. The BOE recommends that a caseworker from the agency or parent should accompany the youth to the interview.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We recommend that the contract residential providers be required to make arrangements to find a school placement for each youth at least one month prior to his/her release. As outlined in the Board of Education regulations, the contract provider should send a letter to the appropriate Board of Education office describing the youth's change in status and requesting placement in a specific school. The letter should include the youth's anticipated release date and include the name, phone number and address of a caseworker from the contract agency as the contact person during the enrollment process. The contract provider should also include the youth's school records and any clinical reports, if applying for special education.

The facility should make arrangements to bring the young person to New York City for an interview, as required by the Board of Education, or facilitate a phone interview if permitted. If an in-person interview is required, then the youth's caseworker and parents should accompany the youth to the interview, if possible, or arrange for a phone interview. Similarly, if the youth requires additional assessments for special education, the facility should be responsible for bringing the young person to New York City for these assessments and should require the youth's caseworker and parents to accompany the youth as well. The facility should also facilitate any additional assessments on its campus as well.

Once the youth is released, a caseworker from the contract agency and the youth's parents should accompany the youth to school the day after the youth's return. We strongly recommend that the

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25 Specialized Instructional Environment Classes are separate classes for youth with more severe disabilities, and class sizes range from 6-12 students. SIE VII is for children who are severely emotionally disturbed.

26 *Students Returning To New York City Public Schools From Agency Care*, Regulation of the Chancellor No. A-160, City School District of the City of New York, 5/13/93.

agency caseworker act as an advocate for the youth to facilitate the enrollment process, as it can be a confusing and frustrating process to re-enroll students who have been released from a juvenile facility. For example, if the appropriate paperwork was not completed for the youth, the caseworker must tell the school that it is required to accept the youth immediately while the paperwork and any additional assessments are completed. Without this advocacy, it is unlikely that these students will be permitted to enter the school.

CONTRACT RESIDENTIAL PROVIDERS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO SECURE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR ELIGIBLE YOUTH PRIOR TO THEIR RELEASE

FINDINGS: The contract residential providers are not required to secure continuing health insurance for youth after their release. If a youth needs to continue taking medication or receive mental health counseling upon his/her release from a contract residential facility, each requires a referral from the facility and health insurance coverage to pay for services. The overwhelming majority of youth released from contract residential facilities are under age 18 and can be eligible for Child Health Plus if they meet income eligibility requirements. For example, the monthly income for a family of three cannot exceed $1,846 to qualify for Child Health Plus. Furthermore, although automatically covered by Medicaid while in the facility, many youth will also qualify for Medicaid coverage because of their parents' income level. Enrollment in Medicaid requires a monthly income not in excess of $1,539 for a family of three.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Prior to the youth's release, the contract residential facilities should be required to re-certify youth for Medicaid if eligible or to assist them in applying for Child Health Plus. In addition, the facilities should be required to link the youth with a primary physician upon release and make referrals to medical and mental health services.

Conclusion

Youth are removed from the community in an attempt to rehabilitate them and to maintain the public's safety. Without the appropriate structure and services while in a facility and follow-up services upon the youth's release to the community, young people will not be given adequate tools to change their behavior and improve their decision-making and may still be a danger to the public. Failure to provide aftercare or follow-up services to every youth who is released from an OCFS facility or a contract residential facility severely undermines the youth's ability to positively integrate him/herself back into community life. Although OCFS has established a comprehensive aftercare component for youth released from State-run facilities, budget cuts that have impacted OCFS staffing, failure to enroll youth in school the day of the youth's release and the lack of community resources — including mental health services, after-school programs, jobs and vocational training programs, and family counseling – jeopardize their abilities to transition home successfully. OCFS has taken crucial steps to strengthen its aftercare services by piloting the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) for juvenile delinquents who have substance abuse problems, and implementing the Prescriptive Program Initiative that will better identify youth who are ready to transition into the community upon release from a State-run facility. Many youth make terrific strides towards improving their self-esteem and decision-making while incarcerated, but without supervision and supports when released, youth will be hard-pressed to transfer these skills into their home environment.

Appendix A

NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CONDITIONS OF RELEASE/GROUNDS FOR RELEASE REVOCATION

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: EXECUTIVE LAW, ARTICLE 19-0, SECTIONS 500, 501, 510, 523. ALSO, DFY RULES AND REGULATIONS (PART 169, TITLE 9 OF THE NEW YORK CODES, RULES AND REGULATIONS).

Name of Youth _____

Name of Facility _____

I understand that before I can be transferred from this facility I must agree to the following conditions of transfer. I also understand that after my transfer, a violation of one or more of these conditions may result in revocation of my transfer and a return to a Office of Children and Family Services facility. I have read each of the conditions and they have been read and explained to me so that I feel I fully understand what each one means.

I, _____, agree to meet the following conditions upon my transfer.

_____

Name of Youth

I will: _____

1. Fully comply with the attached Statewide Curfew Standards;

2. Not associate with persons whose influence would have a detrimental effect upon me, including but not limited to persons previously convicted of crime or having a known criminal background, including the following named individuals:

3. Attend school in accordance with the provisions of part I of Article 65 of the Education Law or by agreement with my Aftercare Worker and/or cooperate in seeking to obtain, and in accepting, employment and employment counseling services;

4. Abstain from the use or possession of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, marijuana, habit-forming drugs not lawfully prescribed for my use, or any other harmful or dangerous substance;

5. Report to my Aftercare Worker as directed;

6. Not commit a crime, or an act which would be a crime if committed by an adult;

7. Not operate a motor vehicle without a valid license;

8. Obey all reasonable commands of my parents or other lawful authorities;

9. Not run away from the lawful custody of my parents.

I also agree to the additional conditions cited below:

10. I have read and understand the Notice to Youth in Non-Secure Facilities concerning Discipline Rules of Conduct.

11. Participate in any family and/or substance abuse evaluation and program as deemed necessary by my Aftercare Worker.

Aftercare Worker: _____

_____

_____

Signature Title Date

Facility Representative: _____

_____

_____

_____

Signature Title Date

Youth: _____

_____

Signature Date

Appendix B

NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
OCFS STANDARDS OF SUPERVISION

	HIGH	MODERATE	ADMINISTRATIVE
Release Confirmation (within 24 hours of estimated time of arrival)	Confirms youth's arrival at home and arranges for first meeting	Confirms youth's arrival at home and arranges for first meeting	NA
First meeting (within three business days of release from facility)	Youth receives orientation, reviews and signs Conditions of Release, Major Rules and Youth Grievance Forms	Youth receives orientation, reviews and signs Conditions of Release, Major Rules and Youth Grievance Forms	NA
At Home, Office or Field Site if safety requires	Youth recieves four face-to-face visits per month	Youth receives two face-to-face visits per month	Youth in community recieves one face-to-face visits per month
Parent/Guardian Contact	Parent/Guardian two face-to-face contacts per month	Parent/Guardian one face-to-face contact per month	Parent/Guardian one face-to-face contact every other month
Phone Contacts	Youth/parent/guardian recieves two completed phone calls per month to monitor youth's adjustment to home (i.e. curfew)	Youth/parent/guardian receives one completed phone call per month to monitor youth's adjustment to home (i.e. curfew)	Youth/parent/guardian receives one completed phone call per month to monitor youth's adjustment to home (i.e. curfew)
OR	**OR**	**OR**	
	Where necessary, one additional home visit can substitute for all phone contacts with youth/parent/guardian	Where necessary, one additional home visit can substitute for all phone contacts with youth/parent/guardian	Where necessary, one additional home visit can substitute for all phone contacts with youth/parent/guardian

NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
OCFS STANDARDS OF SUPERVISION (CONT.)

	HIGH	MODERATE	ADMINISTRATIVE
At School or Alternative Program (if enrolled)	Youth's school/alternative program receives one visit per month to monitor youth's progress (i.e. attendance)	Youth's school/alternative program receives one visit per month to monitor youth's progress (i.e. attendance)	Youth's school/alternative program receives one telephone call per month to monitor youth's progress (i.e. attendance)
OR	**OR**	**OR**	**OR**
	School/alternative program receives bi-weekly telephone contact to monitor progress	School/alternative program receives bi-weekly telephone contact to monitor progress	NA
Employment (if employed) *Counselor will speak to employer if employer knows youth is with OCFS*	Aftercare Counselor verifies employment once per month (i.e. site visit, telephone, pay stub)	Aftercare Counselor verifies employment once per month (i.e. site visit, telephone, pay stub)	Aftercare Counselor verifies employment once per month (i.e. site visit, telephone, pay stub)
Other Services (if enrolled) *Jail, Detention, Job Corps or AWOL*	Service Provider receives two telephone calls per month to discuss youth's progress	Service Provider receives one telephone call per month to discuss youth's progress	Service Provider receives one telephone call per month to discuss youth's progress

Appendix C

JUVENILE AFTERCARE SERVICES TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Bonnie Bach
Sally Ballard
Carol Bowen, Esq.
Helen Cooper
Judy Garson, Esq.
Audrey Kislik
Rose Lansbury
Nancy Locker, Chair
Elinor Mannucci, Ph.D.
Victoria Munroe
Hermine Nessen

Appendix D

QUESTIONS FOR VOLUNTARY PROVIDERS

Agency _____

Person Interviewed _____

1. Of the youth in residence, how many are placed in your program through the juvenile justice system?

   Please describe the process by which youth in the juvenile justice system are placed in your program. i.e. directly through the Family Court, or replacement through OCFS.

2. Do you pre-screen the youth from the juvenile justice system before accepting them into your program? What is the criteria for admissions?

3. What is the average length of stay for youth placed in your facility from the juvenile justice system? Do they stay in the residential program for the full length of placement?

4. Do you ever request that OCFS file an extension of placement for youth at your residence?

5. Please describe the components of your residential program for youth placed through the juvenile justice system. Are youth transitioned to different kinds of programming or residences during a pre-release period? Is your program structured to integrate aftercare services during the youth's stay at your program?

6. Does your agency enroll youth in their local school upon their release? If yes, please describe the process for enrollment.

7. Does your agency request Medicaid coverage for all eligible youth? Does your agency seek to establish a medical home in their community for youth released from your program?

8. Does your program employ aftercare caseworkers? If yes, do the caseworkers have any formal or informal linkages with local community-based organizations? Do they work with families while the youth is in residence at your program?

9. Knowing that the State does not provide you with funding to provide aftercare services, do you provide any follow-up or transitional services to youth leaving your program? If yes, what is your source of funding? Please describe the services offered.

10. Knowing that the State does not provide funding to track youth who have been released from your program, do you have a system for tracking youth for a particular period upon their release?

11. If a youth cannot return to his/her family, what kind of alternative plans do you make to release the youth from your program? i.e. foster care placement

12. Given adequate funding, how would you structure your aftercare program?

Appendix E

Citizens' Committee for Children's Task Force on Juvenile Aftercare Services

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

105 East 22nd Street, New York, NY 10010 • phone (212) 673-1800

GENERAL INFORMATION

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us today to discuss the aftercare services offered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to juvenile delinquents and the role that you play in providing these services. We are grateful that you have agreed to share your expertise in the area of facilitating the transition between living in an OCFS facility and returning to the community, and we appreciate the opportunity to hear firsthand about your experiences helping these youth prepare for successful and productive lives. Please know that any and all information that we collect during this interview will be held strictly **CONFIDENTIAL** and that no person will be identified in any of our findings.

Name of Aftercare Counselor: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

CCC Volunteers: _____

Date of Interview: _____

PART I: CASE COMPOSITION

1. What is the average number of cases on your caseload?

2. What is the age range of youth on your current caseload?

3. How many youth on your current caseload were convicted of a misdemeanor?

4. How many youth on your current caseload were convicted of a felony?

5. How many youth on your current caseload are: *complete mix*

   ❑ on high level aftercare _____

   ❑ on moderate level aftercare _____

   ❑ on administrative level aftercare _____

6. Are you required to have certain proportions of your caseload on high, moderate and administrative levels of aftercare?
   ❑ Yes
   ❑ No

6a. If yes, please list the proportions.

7. Does your caseload cover cases from certain community districts?
   ❑ Yes
   ❑ No

   7a. If yes, what community districts do you cover?

   7b. If no, how are your cases assigned?

8. Of youth who were released and assigned to your caseload in 1997, what is the average length of time that these youth were on aftercare status?

9. How is the length of time that a youth is on aftercare determined?

PART II. INITIAL CONTACTS WHILE YOUTH IS IN STATE FACILITY

We would now like to talk to you about how cases are assigned to you and what kind of interaction takes place between you, and a youth and his/her family while the youth is still in a State facility.

1. How far in advance of the release date do you receive a youth's file from the facility?
   - ❑ Six months
   - ❑ 90 days
   - ❑ 60 days
   - ❑ 30 days
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

2. Do you have contact with anyone at the facility upon receiving the file?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   2a. If yes, who within the facility are you in contact with?

   2b. If yes, what kind of contact do you have?
   - ❑ Phone call with facility staff
   - ❑ Meeting with facility staff
   - ❑ Letter
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

3. After receiving the youth's file, do you contact the youth?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No – if no, please go to question #5

   3a. If yes, is this contact made before or after the home visit is made?
   - ❑ Before home visit
   - ❑ After home visit
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

   3b. If yes, how soon after a youth has been placed at a State facility do you contact the youth?

4. How do you contact the youth?
   - ❑ By letter
   - ❑ By phone
   - ❑ In person at the facility
   - ❑ In person in the community prior to release
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

4a. During this contact, what is discussed?
   - ❑ Pre-release plan
   - ❑ Release plan
   - ❑ Release date
   - ❑ Contract
   - ❑ Youth's service needs while in State facility
   - ❑ Youth's services needs when released to the community
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

5. Are you required to have on-going contact with a youth while the youth is still in a State facility after your first contact?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

6. On average, how many times do you visit youth while in State facilities who have been assigned to your caseload?

7. On average, how many times to you have contact with youth while in State facilities who have been assigned to your caseload?

8. What is discussed during any visits and/or contacts?

9. After receiving the youth's file, do you contact the parents or other legal guardian?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

9a. If yes, is this contact made before or after you have had contact with the youth?
   - ❑ Before contact with the youth
   - ❑ After contact with the youth
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

9b. If yes, how soon after a youth has been placed in a State facility do you contact the parents or other legal guardian?

10. How do you first make contact with the parents or other legal guardian while the youth is still in the facility?
- ❑ By letter
- ❑ By phone
- ❑ In person at the facility
- ❑ In person in the community
- ❑ Other, please explain _____

10a. During this initial contact, what is discussed?
- ❑ Pre-release plan
- ❑ Release plan
- ❑ Release date
- ❑ Contract
- ❑ Home visit
- ❑ Youth's service needs while in the facility
- ❑ Youth's service needs when released to the community
- ❑ Other, please explain _____

PART III: HOME VISIT

1. Do you complete a home visit for all youth being assigned to your caseload?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

1a. If no, please explain when you would not complete a home visit. Skip to Part IV.

2. How far before the release date do you complete the home visit?

3. How are the parents or legal guardian notified of the home visit?
- ❑ By letter
- ❑ By phone
- ❑ Other, please explain _____

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4. Who within the household is required to be present during the home visit?
   - ❑ All persons living in the household
   - ❑ All adults over age eighteen living in the household
   - ❑ Both parents, if the youth is from a two parent household
   - ❑ One parent
   - ❑ Legal guardian
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

5. Do you use an assessment tool (form) when completing the home visit?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   5a. If yes, may we have a copy of the assessment tool.

6. Generally how long does the home visit take?
   - ❑ Two hours
   - ❑ One hours
   - ❑ 30 minutes
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

7. If the home is found to be unsuitable for the youth's return, what is the procedure for releasing the youth to the community?

8. What are the most common reasons that a home would be found unsuitable?

9. Of the youth who were assigned to your aftercare caseload in 1997, what proportion had homes that were found to be unsuitable for their return?

PART IV: PREPARING FOR RELEASE TO THE COMMUNITY

1. Who decides what level of aftercare (high, moderate, administrative) is necessary for each youth?
   - ❑ OCFS facility staff
   - ❑ Aftercare counselor
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

2. Is a release plan developed for each youth prior to his/her release?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   2a. If yes, may we have a copy of a typical release plan?

3. Do you participate in the development of each youth's release plan?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   3a. If yes, please describe your input:

4. What support systems/services are considered in developing a release plan?
   - ❑ School
   - ❑ After-school program
   - ❑ Mental Health services
   - ❑ Substance abuse services
   - ❑ Primary physician
   - ❑ Health insurance
   - ❑ Employment
   - ❑ Family counseling
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

5. Are you responsible for writing the **contract** for release?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   5a. If yes, what criteria do you use to determine the appropriate contents of the contract?

6. Is a form used for writing the contract?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

7. Does the contract include curfews?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

8. Are you responsible for setting the **reporting schedule**?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   8a. If yes, what criteria do you use to determine the appropriate reporting schedule?

9. Do you review the contract and release plan with the youth prior to release?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

10. Do you review the contract and release plan with the parents or other legal guardian prior to release?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No

11. Do parents or other legal guardian need to sign the contract made with the youth?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No

PART V: POST-RELEASE

1. Of the youth who were released to aftercare on your caseload in 1997, what proportion made all of the required contacts?

2. Where do the required contacts take place?
   - ❑ At home
   - ❑ At school
   - ❑ In your office
   - ❑ By phone
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

3. Are you required to have a specific proportion of your required contacts occur

	Yes	No
At home	❑	❑
At school	❑	❑
In your office	❑	❑
Other, please explain	❑	❑

4. Generally, what is the duration of these contacts?

5. Are you required to discuss certain topics with the youth at each required contact?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   5a. If yes, what are the topics?

6. Generally, what is discussed during the required contacts?

7. Are youth able to contact you other than for the required contacts?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

8. Generally, what do youth contact you for?
   - ❑ School problems
   - ❑ Needing services of other community based organizations
   - ❑ Needing medical care
   - ❑ Counseling
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

9. What is the procedure for follow-up if a youth misses a required contact?

10. Are there any sanctions given for missed contacts?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No

10a. If yes, please describe the sanctions

11. Do you have contact with each youth's family while the youth is on aftercare?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

11a. If yes, please describe the contacts, including what is discussed and where the contacts take place:

11b. If yes, on average, how often do you contact each youth's family while the youth is on aftercare status?

12. Is the youth's family able to contact you while the youth is on aftercare?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

PART VI: COMMUNITY SERVICES

School

1. Are you required to have enrolled youth in school prior to their release from a facility?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

2. Of the youth who were released to aftercare on your caseload in 1997, what proportion were enrolled in school prior to their release from a facility?

3. Of the youth who were released to aftercare on your caseload in 1997, what proportion were enrolled in special-education classes prior to their release from a facility?

4. Is there a proscribed period within which you must enroll a youth in school?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

4a. If yes, what is the proscribed length of time?

5. What is the procedure for enrolling youth in school?

6. Of the youth who were released to aftercare on your caseload in 1997, what was the average length of time involved to enroll a youth in school after their release?

7. Of the youth who were released to aftercare on your caseload in 1997, what was the average length of time involved to enroll a youth in special education classes after their release?

8. To facilitate enrollment, do you
   - ❑ Go to the school
   - ❑ Accompany a parent to the school
   - ❑ Call the school
   - ❑ Accompany a youth to school
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____
   - ❑ None

9. If you are unable to enroll a youth in school upon his/her release, do you contact OCFS central office?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

10. If you are unable to enroll a youth in school upon his/her release, do you contact the Board of Education central office?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

11. Is there a specific office within the Board of Education that deals with these youth?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

11a. If yes, what is the name of that office?

12. Do you monitor each youth's attendance at school?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

13. Do you monitor each youth's academic performance at school?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Health Insurance

1. Are youth required to have health insurance coverage prior to being released from a State facility?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

2. Of the youth who released to aftercare on your caseload in 1997, what proportion had health insurance when they were released to the community?

3. Do you help eligible youth enroll in Medicaid or Child Health Plus?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Other Community Resources

1. Do you have linkages with other community-based providers to refer youth for services?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

1a. If yes, do you have
- ❑ formal linkage agreements
- ❑ informal referral process
- ❑ other, please explain _____

2. Do you make referrals to other community-based organizations to refer youth for services?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

3. What are the most common services that you refer youth to?
- ❑ After-school programs
- ❑ Tutoring
- ❑ Employment training
- ❑ Mental health services
- ❑ Substance abuse services
- ❑ Primary physician
- ❑ Other, please explain _____

4. Generally, are these services available?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   4a. If no , please describe the barriers to other community-based services to youth:

5. Generally, do youth follow through on any referrals that you make to other community-based services?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

5a. If no, please explain why you believe youth do not follow through on referrals:

PART VII: LEVELS OF SUPERVSION

1. Does the number of required contacts change while a youth is on aftercare?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

2. Who makes the final determination to change the level of supervision?
   - ❑ Aftercare counselor
   - ❑ Supervisor
   - ❑ OCFS facility staff
   - ❑ Other, please explain:

3. What criteria are used to determine when the level of supervision should change (i.e. good behavior, length of time on aftercare)?

4. How are youth notified of any change in their level of supervision?
   - ❑ In-person
   - ❑ By phone
   - ❑ By letter
   - ❑ Other, please explain:

5. How is it determined that a youth will no longer be on aftercare status and is no longer in the State's custody?

6. What criteria are used to determine when aftercare is over?

7. Do you remain in contact with youth who you have previously worked with while on aftercare?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

8. Are there any follow-up services offered to youth who are no longer on aftercare?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

9. Are you able to extend placement while a youth is on aftercare?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

9a. What is the procedure for extending placement while a youth is on aftercare?

PART VIII: MAJOR RULE VIOLATIONS

1. Of the youth who were assigned to your aftercare caseload in 1997, what proportion have been rearrested?

2. Of the youth who were assigned to your aftercare caseload in 1997, what proportion had their release revoked?

3. Generally, what are the reasons for revoking release?

4. Who makes the determination to revoke release?

5. Do you use graduated sanctions to control behavior prior to revoking release?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

5a. If yes, do the graduated sanctions include
   - ❑ Change in curfew
   - ❑ Increased number of required contacts
   - ❑ Other, please explain _____

6. Do you remain in contact with youth if their release is revoked?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   6a. If yes, please describe the contact

7. For youth who have their release revoked, are they assigned to your caseload if they are subsequently released to aftercare?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No
   - ❑ Sometimes, please explain: _____

PART IX: YOUTH WHO ARE RELEASED TO AFTERCARE AND WHO ARE ALSO PLACED IN FOSTER CARE

1. Does your caseload include youth who have been released to foster care while on aftercare and are receiving independent living services?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

2. Do you have the same responsibilities for youth on your caseload who have been released to their families and youth who have been released and placed in foster care?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

2a. If no, please describe your responsibilities for youth who have been released and placed in foster care:

3. Do you provide any special services that are not offered to your regular caseload, for youth who have been released to foster care?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

4. Do you have any interaction with foster parents?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

4a. If yes, please describe the interaction:

PART X: WRAP-UP

1. In your experience, what do youth need the most help with upon their release?

2. Given additional resources, what would you change about the services offered to youth on aftercare?

3. Please tell us anything about your aftercare program that you feel our questions did not cover.

Thank you for your time. The interview is now over.

Notes

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